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For the first two-thirds, at least, of the twentieth century, the smoking of tobacco in America was so ubiquitous as to be virtually invisible. Everybody smoked — or at least, everybody accepted smoking. Indoors, outdoors, at work, at home, in hospitals, restaurants, gyms, airplanes, trains, waiting rooms, doctors' offices — wherever you were (except, perhaps, in church), an ashtray was provided. If you weren't a smoker, or if you were allergic to tobacco smoke, that was pretty much your problem: while it was customary to ask, "mind if I smoke?" before lighting up, it was not quite as acceptable to answer in the affirmative. It was a smoker's world.

By the 1940s, about half of the male population of the United States, and about 30% of the female population, smoked cigarettes (Nicolaides-Bouman, Wald, Forey and Lee 449). Data on cigar and pipe smoking have been less conscientiously tracked, but we can gauge their relative popularity by the sales figures. In 1925, cigarettes accounted for 25% of all tobacco sales; cigars for 18%, and pipe, hand-rolling, and chewing tobacco for a full 52%. By 1945, cigarettes had cornered 59% of the market, cigars were down to 9%, and loose tobacco to 27%. And by 1955, cigarettes were dominating at 74%, while cigars held steady at 9%. Only 6% of the tobacco sold that year went into pipes, and 6% was sold as chewing tobacco (454). After World War I, then, cigarettes began to take hold as the nicotine delivery device of choice, and their

popularity continued to increase, at the expense of the cigar and the pipe, throughout the twentieth century.[1]

William Faulkner smoked. He is perhaps most famous for his ever-present pipe, but Joseph Blotner's biography includes many photos of Faulkner holding and smoking cigarettes as well. There is one in his R.A.F. uniform, for example, and another of him seated at his writing desk with a pen in one hand and a cigarette in the other. So it is no surprise that many of his characters also enjoyed tobacco in its various forms. To judge from the extant criticism, however, it seems that readers have, over the years, internalized these fictional tobacco products, seeing them on the page and glossing right over them, noticing and not-noticing just the way Americans in the early part of the century did in real life. But a look at who smokes in Yoknapatawpha, and when, and why, and to what effect, reveals a hierarchy of tobacco use, with pipe smokers at the top of the heap, cigar smokers in the middle, and cigarette smokers at the bottom. I intend to demonstrate that hierarchy, and to argue also that Yoknapatawpha tobacco smoking, generally and in its particulars, is related to perceptions of social and legal justice.

To consider the meaning of tobacco use in Yoknapatawpha, then, it is appropriate to take on Faulkner's cigarette smokers first. After all, they form the broad base of the pyramid, both in Yoknapatawpha and in the culture out of which Faulkner was writing. Perhaps respectable people smoked cigarettes in the culture at large, but in Yoknapatawpha, this is not a savory lot. In Yoknapatawpha, it seems, only the fallen smoke cigarettes. They are people who are in trouble in one way or another.

"Trouble" means that something bad is happening or is going to happen, deservedly or not. For example, a person can get in trouble for breaking a rule, or law, or societal norm, but one can also get in trouble just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. A person in trouble is in a space where he or she doesn't belong, be that space psychological or physical. Trouble is the knowledge that one is about to be judged, and the anticipation of negative judgment.

Joe Christmas is an example of a man in trouble. He doesn't know where he belongs, so he is usually in the wrong place at the wrong time. He is constantly anticipating negative judgment — and he is constantly smoking cigarettes. Similarly, Popeye of *Sanctuary* is a habitual smoker; he even counts out his final days in cigarette butts (instead, I suppose, of coffee spoons). In this way, Popeye's cigarettes are "coffin nails" in more than the usual sense of the metaphor.

But why shouldn't Popeye smoke? Everyone else in *Sanctuary* does. Even Temple, even in her pre-rape days, is a smoker. Early on, she bums a cigarette from Ruby, and it is clear that this is not her first cigarette. Later, at Miss Reba's brothel, Temple stays in her room smoking and drinking gin. But when she is "redeemed," at trial, she does not smoke. Nor does she smoke in the presence of her father in the Luxembourg gardens; in the presence of her father the judge, she is no longer in trou-

ble. But by the time we meet her again in *Requiem for a Nun*, she has become a chain smoker, practically lighting one cigarette from the burning end of another. Temple's cigarette habit reflects her powerlessness: she only smokes when she is out of place, out of control, or out of excuses — in short, in trouble.

Cigarettes, then, are linked with outsider status, murder, rape, prostitution, general bad behavior. Because they turn up between the stained fingers of characters who have fallen from various kinds of grace, they can almost always be read as tiny, cylindrical carriers of the fires of hell. And although they are often considered phallic symbols, cigarettes in Yoknapatawpha tend to feminize the men (Popeye is impotent, for example, and Joe loses his manhood quite literally) and weaken the women who smoke them. Both Temple and Joe repeat the phrase, "something is happening to me" (Temple, *Sanctuary* 102) or "something is going to happen to me" (Joe, *Light in August* 118). The unspoken corollary to this refrain is, "and I am powerless to stop it." These two cigarette smokers have no power to control their worlds, even if they would wish to do so (and perhaps they do not). Furthermore, each feels a bit of shame about this powerlessness; for Joe, an actual man, and Temple, a woman who yearns for, or at least plays at, the sexual freedom of a man, such powerlessness before fate is gallingly feminizing.

There's nothing effeminate about a cigar, however. This most Oedipal of phallic symbols represents a desire for power in the psyches of the men (always men, in Yoknapatawpha) who smoke them. But the desire for power does not necessarily mean the achievement of it. Old Bayard Sartoris of *Flags in the Dust*, for example, is a habitual cigar smoker, but he is only seen smoking when he feels his power is threatened.[2] It does not take an advanced degree in psychology, for instance, to understand the Oedipal underpinnings of the scene in which Young Bayard returns from the war and meets up with Old Bayard on the porch of the Sartoris homestead. The scene opens on Old Bayard smoking on the porch:

> His cigar was cold, and he moved and dug a match from his waistcoat and relit it and braced his feet again upon the railing, and again the drifting sharpness of tobacco lay along the windless currents of the silver air straying and fading slowly amid locust-breaths and the ceaseless fairy reiteration of crickets and frogs. There was a mockingbird somewhere down the valley, far away, and in a while another sang from the magnolia at the corner of the garden fence. An automobile passed along the smooth valley road, slowed for the railway crossing, then sped again, and when the sound of it had died away, the whistle of the nine-thirty train swelled from among the hills.
>
> (43)

In this passage, it is possible to trace Old Bayard's entire progression through the novel. His cigar, his power, his potency, starts out "cold:"

he is old; all that is left to him is swapping stories with Old Man Falls on the porch of the family homestead, under Miss Jenny's sharp, nagging control. He "relights his cigar," struggling to get some of this potency back: he refuses the doctor Miss Jenny procures for him; he lords it over his servants; he attempts to rein in Young Bayard's reckless and self-destructive habits. The "sharpness of tobacco," however, fades in the wind, and he hears a couple of "mockingbirds" — nobody pays him much mind anymore, not Jenny, not Caspey, certainly not Young Bayard. Then Old Bayard hears an automobile (he is to die in an automobile, driven by Young Bayard) and as the sound of that fades away, he hears the whistle of the evening train, which will, according to some spirituals, bear him away to heaven.

Old Bayard's cigar goes cold twice more before Young Bayard appears, and it is he, Young Bayard, who attempts to light Old Bayard's cigar for him, noting his shaking hands. But Old Bayard is not ready to cede his power to his young grandson just yet: "old Bayard repulsed him sharply and sucked stubbornly and impotently at the match in his unsteady fingers" (45). Old Bayard's cigar could not be more representative of his sense of masculine power if it had testicles. And to add insult to injury, Old Bayard's grandson, the man who is supposed to replace Old Bayard in the Sartoris power structure, smokes cigarettes.

In the Compson family, both Jasons, *père* and *fils*, are cigar smokers; perhaps not coincidentally, these are arguably two of the most ineffectual white men in Yoknapatawpha. In contrast, Quentin Compson, perhaps the *single* most powerless character in all of Faulkner's work, is *associated* with cigars, but does not actually smoke them. For example, in *The Sound and the Fury,* Quentin buys a cigar early on the day of his suicide; he even lights it and takes a few puffs. But then he is confronted by two "bootblacks, one on either side, shrill and raucous, like blackbirds" (83), who try to get his business. Powerless to say no, he gives one of them the cigar. But even that act of largesse does not leave him with any sense of power: as he walks away, "[t]he one with the cigar was trying to sell it to the other for a nickel" (83). If a cigar represents power, then, Quentin gives it away; the shoeshine man, who should, in Quentin's ideology, be the more powerless, turns power into a commodity which he can sell for even more power. Later, Quentin is offered a cigar by Herbert Head, Caddy's fiancé, who usurps what Quentin sees as his own role of protecting Caddy. But even if Herbert holds power over Quentin, he does not stick around; Quentin thus feels subjugated by one who never did hold any power. (It is also worth noting that Dalton Ames, the "blackguard"[111] who took Caddy's virginity in the first place, is a cigarette smoker.)

In contrast to the cigar smokers, Faulkner's pipe smokers tend to hold positions of some kind of authority, and have closer ties to the past and to tradition than do the cigarette smokers. Perhaps because of the longer time it takes to prepare and to smoke, a pipe indicates on the part of its user both a permanence and a leisure that users of the relatively

fast, portable, and disposable cigar and cigarette do not enjoy. And even though a pipe itself can be considered a symbol of femininity, with its empty bowl waiting to be filled, Faulkner's pipe smokers of both genders are masculinized, at least while the pipe is out. That is, they become the dominant participant in whatever social situation they are in, they become powerful, they become the one in charge. Others defer to them. The pipe becomes a scepter of sorts, with all the symbolism that that implies, and the one holding it rules.

There is an interesting contrast between the cigar smoker and the pipe smoker in Chapter Nineteen of *Sanctuary*. Here, Horace Benbow, a lawyer, runs into Senator Clarence Snopes on the train back to Jefferson from Oxford. Clarence is smoking a cigar — or rather, holding an unlit one; Horace is holding an unlit pipe. Clarence, a consummate politician, is described as wearing a "soiled, light-colored felt hat" and as having a "vast, soft, white neck" (172-73). He is vaguely repellant, and this impression is underscored by the porter to whom he gives one of his cigars. Horace asks the porter what he is going to do with the cigar, and the porter replies, "'I wouldn't give it to nobody I know'" (177). It seems that everyone, even the porters, knows Clarence and knowsthat he is not trustworthy, even if he thinks much of himself. Nonetheless, Horace, the pipe smoker, manages to get some information out of him without divulging anything to Clarence. In this way, he demonstrates power over the Senator — and to celebrate, after he returns to the Pullman car, Horace actually lights his pipe.

Mollie Beauchamp is another example of a powerful pipe smoker whose pipe remains unlit. Mollie is a black woman, and an old one at that: the level of power that she should wield in the racially stratified county in which she lives is low. But Mollie is able to make things happen. In the story "Go Down, Moses," Gavin Stevens goes to visit her after her grandson, Butch Beauchamp, is executed in Chicago. He finds her holding "a reed-stemmed clay pipe but she was not smoking it, the ash dead and white in the stained bowl" (*Go Down, Moses* 361). Mollie is in mourning; in fact, she is the chief mourner. It is she who leads the lamentation that conflates Roth Edmonds, the wealthy white landowner who kicked Butch out of Jefferson, with Pharaoh, and Butch with Benjamin. Though she does not smoke it, she holds the pipe, and the ashes, "dead and white" in the bowl, represent Butch's death. Butch is black, but in death he loses his race: Mollie will use her power to insist that he have a proper funeral, with flowers, and that his death notice be put in the paper just like white folks'. Mollie laments right over the usually in-control Gavin Stevens, District Attorney; she will listen to no white authority tonight:

> "Roth Edmonds sold him," the old Negress said. She swayed back and forth in the chair. "Sold my Benjamin."
> "Hush," Miss Worsham said. "Hush, Mollie. Hush now."
> "No," Stevens said. "No he didn't, Aunt Mollie. It wasn't Mr.

> Edmonds. Mr. Edmonds didn't — " *But she can't hear me,* he thought. She was not even looking at him. She never had looked at him.
> "Sold my Benjamin," she said. "Sold him in Egypt."
> "Sold him in Egypt," Worsham said.
> "Roth Edmonds sold my Benjamin."
> "Sold him to Pharaoh."
> "Sold him to Pharaoh and now he dead."
>
> (362)

Gavin, the white law in Yoknapatawpha, is so disconcerted by Mollie's refusal to acknowledge him — a form of power — that he can't catch his breath and has to leave, "almost running" (362). Mollie's pipe is a symbol, then, of her power, her permanence, her tie to the community which is too strong for the likes of Roth Edmonds to banish. She requires that the white authority in town — Gavin the District Attorney, and the white editor of the newspaper — treat her and her "slain wolf"(364) of a grandson with the utmost respect. As Thadious Davis puts it in *Games of Property*, "Mollie . . . refuses shame" (234). It is in this refusal that her power lies, or rather manifests itself. This is not to say that she is "shameless," because that word implies that someone in a more dominant position than she thinks she ought to be ashamed. Rather, she *refuses* shame; she rewrites the rules of social interaction. And she does it with a pipe in her hand.

So there appears to be a correlation, in Yoknapatawpha, between a smoker's level of power and the device he or she uses to consume tobacco. The people in power are the ones who are not in trouble; they smoke pipes. They are above shame, above *feeling* trouble. The cigar smokers, on the other hand, may not be in trouble, but neither do they hold any real power. They do not take responsibility for any trouble that is going on around them. They may wish for power, but ultimately they do not hold it. The cigarette smokers, finally, seem to wallow in trouble. They are doomed; for whatever reason they know that justice will not be theirs — or if it is, they will not find themselves on the happy end of it.

What all of Faulkner's smokers have in common, however, is that they surround themselves with smoke, a most immaterial of material substances. Each of them uses smoke to obfuscate others' perceptions of them, or their own perceptions of themselves. What is important here is not only *that* these characters smoke, but *when* they do, and why. Thus, for example, the chameleon Gavin Stevens, the Heidelberg Ph.D. who even *chews* tobacco as he squats with the farmers at the general store, finds smoke useful to modify his image in the eyes of those around him; Noel Polk has pointed out that Gavin's use of a corncob pipe in *Intruder in the Dust* positions him as one who is "largely blowing smoke"(222), that is, more interested in his own words than in action. And Temple Drake surrounds herself not only with smoke, but with mirrors as well.

Faulkner provides his own ideas about smoking and about the uses to which it can be put in the story "Smoke," from *Knight's Gambit*. In this story, Gavin "blows smoke" literally, into a brass box, in order to catch a criminal. "Smoke" centers around the murder of Judge Dukinfield, who was shot between the eyes in the process of validating the will of Anse Holland. Anse's sons, Young Anse and Virginius, are suspected, but Gavin argues that the murderer was actually a hit man from Memphis hired by Anse's cousin-in-law, Granby Dodge. Gavin proves his case by threatening to open a brass box that the judge had kept on his desk. In this box, Gavin claims, was the smoke made by the cigarette that the hit man had been smoking when he came into the office. Further, Gavin claims, this smoke can be analyzed to show that it came from a particular brand of cigarette, a brand that no one else in Jefferson smokes. And that hit man, having been picked up by the police on his way back to Memphis, has already fingered Granby. And so it comes to pass that Granby, panicking, knocks the box out of Gavin's hand and frantically waves away the smoke — and in the process, incriminates himself.

And then comes the kicker: In the box was indeed smoke, but it was smoke that Gavin himself had blown into it just before the proceedings. And what kind of smoke was it? It was pipe smoke.

In "Smoke," the story in which Gavin appears for the first time,[3] Faulkner uses the trope of actual smoke both to clarify and to confuse the matter at hand. Although most of Faulkner's smokers in trouble produce smoke to becloud themselves, here, Granby, in trouble but not a smoker himself, must get rid of the smoke, must literally clear the air, in order to stay out of trouble. In doing so, however, he incriminates himself, which leads to more trouble. In the Jefferson courtroom, then, smoke also operates as fumigation: Gavin literally smokes out the perpetrator. Jefferson justice, here, *depends* on smoke.

Two passages in particular work to illustrate this point. The first is Gavin's characterization of the smoker's habit:

> He [Gavin] was talking about smoking again, about how a man never really enjoys tobacco until he begins to believe that it is harmful to him, and how non-smokers miss one of the greatest pleasures in life for a man of sensibility: the knowledge that he is succumbing to a vice which can injure himself alone.
>
> (25)

Gavin believes that smoke is injurious, but only to the smoker; that in making the choice to smoke, the smoker is choosing self-destruction; and that this self-destruction itself is pleasurable. For Gavin, the pleasure does not derive from the physical sensations of smoking (holding the cigarette, cigar, or pipe; lighting the match; drawing in the smoke; feeling it settle in the lungs; satisfying a physical craving for nicotine) but rather from "knowledge," and what's more, knowledge of evil.

Under this theory, smoking is not pleasurable until that knowledge (or "belief") is attained. According to Gavin, only *knowing* that one is hurting oneself is pleasurable.

This is curious. Gavin is a lawyer, and his job is to make people pay for their injuries to one another. Inflicting injury, then, is wrong, and Gavin knows it perhaps better than anyone. In fact, it is so wrong that he is willing, here and elsewhere, to resort to tricks that straddle the borderline between ethical and unethical in order to secure a conviction. But in this passage, Gavin claims that inflicting injury is okay, even pleasurable, as long as one is injuring "[one]self alone." Injury, then, is acceptable, as long as you don't get in trouble for it. Of course, habitual smoking causes its own kind of trouble: lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease, etc. So it is curious that Gavin would consider a self-inflicted injury not only morally acceptable, but even pleasurable. Gavin thus turns trouble into pleasure.

The second passage comes toward the end of the story, after Granby has incriminated himself, and Gavin and Virginius are discussing the case. Virginius says in a voice

> quite grave, quite sober, "When a man starts doing wrong, it's not what he does; it's what he leaves."
> "But it's what he does that people will have to hurt him for, the outsiders. Because the folks that'll be hurt by what he leaves won't hurt him. So it's a good thing for the rest of us that what he does takes him out of their hands. I have taken him out of your hands now, Virge, blood or no blood. Do you understand?" (35)

In this passage, Gavin is making sure that Virginius understands that justice has been accomplished and that he should not, out of some sense of familial honor, go after Granby himself. Justice has been accomplished through Gavin's use of smoke. But Gavin's reply to Virginius is, again, curious. He states that "what he does takes him out of their hands," and then follows that immediately with "I have taken him out of your hands." The phrasing here equates "I" — Gavin — with "what he [the man who does wrong] does." It is likely that Gavin here is speaking as a representative of law and conflating "what he does" with the process of law that must ensue from that crime. In other words, for Gavin, the act of doing wrong is so inextricably connected to the process of law that would punish that act that the line between them is blurred. Pronouns no longer matter, and neither do the niceties of due process.

In that conflation, Gavin is also foreshadowing his own illegal act of manufacturing evidence. The smoke in the box, as Gavin points out four paragraphs later, is not the actual evidence present from the actual crime, but smoke produced later for the purpose of inciting the criminal to incriminate himself: "I waited as long as I could before I put the smoke in there. Just before you all came into the room, I filled that box

full of pipe smoke and shut it up. But I didn't know. I was a lot scareder than Granby Dodge. But it was all right. That smoke stayed in that box almost an hour" (36). Gavin's smoking (that is, into the box) does in fact injure someone besides "himself alone," but the injury is in the name of justice. And for Gavin, who admits his act "quickly, brightly, cheerfully, almost happily, almost beaming" (36), that is quite all right. The pipe-smoking Gavin, here, is not only above shame, he is behaving almost as if he is above the law.

So it is not by accident that the smoke that Gavin has blown into the box is pipe smoke. Across all the stories in which he appears, Gavin is shown using tobacco in all its forms: pipe, cigar, cigarette, even "chaw," depending on who he is with and what he intends to accomplish. The hit man who actually shoots Judge Dukinfield smokes cigarettes exclusively, however (and he is a typical Faulknerian cigarette smoker: "a smallish man in city clothes . . . with a face like a shaved wax doll, and eyes with a still way of looking and a voice with a still way of talking . . . the man was full of dope right then . . . he was sweating, too, like he wanted to vomit" [27]). It is fitting, then, that such a career criminal should be smoked out, so to speak. But Gavin's brand of justice turns not on cigarette smoke, which is associated with low-lifes and the dregs of society, but rather on *pipe* smoke, which is associated with the upper echelon, with power. Justice, then, rolls *down* the class structure.

In this story, nothing is as it seems: immaterial smoke becomes material evidence; the cigarette smoker who actually committed murder is only hired to do so; the "evidence" is pipe smoke masquerading as cigarette smoke, and even this "evidence" is manufactured. Faulkner's implied comment is that the system of justice in place in Yoknapatawpha is smoky: material yet intangible, subject to dissipation, present and absent at once. In such a system, then, it stands to reason that the players — defendants, advocates, and judges alike — would discover that the kind of justice they will encounter varies according to the kind of smoke they are blowing. In Yoknapatawpha, then, from cigarette to cigar to pipe, from trouble to power, justice goes up in smoke.

Notes

1. Cigarette sales hit a peak of 636.5 billion sold in 1981. Since then, the rate of cigarette sales dropped to 510.9 billion in 1991, and even lower to 398.3 billion in 2001 (FTC 9).
2. Old Bayard, interestingly, is a relatively recent convert to cigars from pipes. He still keeps "a dusty assortment of pipes and three or four jars of tobacco which furnished solace for all the banking force and for a respectable portion of the bank's pipe-smoking clientele" (83). There is no indication that he himself takes a pipe anymore, however: if he did, the pipes would not be quite so "dusty."
3. Although *Knight's Gambit* was not published until 1939, Faulkner wrote "Smoke" in 1930.

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